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# The Non-Lover in Plato's Phaedrus

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I.

In this paper, I offer an interpretation of the most neglected portion of the Phaedrus: the beginning. My immediate purpose is to cast light upon the philosophical function of that much and unjustly maligned character, the non-lover. In a secondary sense, my paper is intended as evidence of a thesis on how to read a Platonic dialogue. Since I have defended this thesis at length elsewhere, I shall restrict myself in the present context to a detailed application of the method I favor, rather than engage in polemical justifications of that method. Only one preliminary comment: the method is simplicity itself; it amounts to the careful and reflective consideration of every aspect of the dialogue under study. As is especially appropriate in the study of a dialogue to the perfect writing, I assume nothing more than that Plato knew what he was doing, and that all portions of his written text are meant to convey their meaning to the careful reader. In this way Plato, rather than the interpreter, or contemporary academic fashion, becomes the standard for what is important in a Platonic dialogue; namely, everything.

The beginning of the Phaedrus is an invitation to return to the beginning of the Symposium. Phaedrus, we recall, is the "father of the logos" at Agathon's banquet; the dialectical ascent in the Symposium begins dramatically from the fact that he is the beloved of the physician Eryximachus. Eryximachus, himself a moderate drinker, turns the banquet from drinking to a praise of Eros, in response to Phaedrus' complaint that the god has been neglected by poets and other encomiasts. Despite the atmosphere of celebration, excitement, and hybristic self-exaltation, the Symposium begins in a sober mixture of medicine and utilitarianism. This note of sobriety is never absent from the banquet, even during the presence of the drunken Alcibiades, who reveals to us the sober interior of Socrates' erotic hybris. Socrates' nocturnal behavior toward the young Alcibiades is thus a reflection of the at least initial sobriety of the nocturnal guests of Agathon. The sobriety of Socrates would seem to be the "erotic" peak or fulfillment of the apparently base sobriety of Phaedrus.

This inner connection between Socrates and Phaedrus is reinforced by the dramatically later dialogue bearing Phaedrus' name. This time, however, instead of being obscured by the darkness of the night, the presence of other speakers, and the peculiar indirectness of a recollection of a recollection, Socrates and Phaedrus are isolated in the light of high noon, and presented directly to the reader without any dramatic mediation. We are not in the home of the elegant tragedian Agathon, but outside the city wall. In the Symposium, Socrates takes the unusual step of wearing shoes; in the Phaedrus, he is unshod, but is portrayed for the only time in the Platonic corpus as walking in the countryside. The sunlight, the dramatic immediacy, the isolation of Socrates and Phaedrus, the simplicity of their surroundings, all suggest a much more sober, and to that extent visible, setting for a dialogue on love than is apparent in the Symposium. The setting of the Phaedrus is in a way the inverse of

the setting of the Symposium, but there are certain features common to both. The first is the emphasis on something unusual concerning Socrates; the second is Socrates' interest, for whatever reason, in speeches, especially in those delivered by sophists or students of sophists. This interest in speeches, of course, provides us with the initial explanation for the link between Socrates and Phaedrus. Both are more interested in talking than in doing; differently stated, both prefer the sobriety of speeches about Eros to the madness of erotic possession.

Socrates insulates himself from the dangerous erotic currents of the banquet by wearing shoes; he counters the excessive sobriety of Phaedrus by meeting him in a beautiful country location with a specially erotic mythological significance: the rape of Oreithuia. However, let us note that, even in responding to the erotic defect of Phaedrus, Socrates has recourse to speech -- in this case, a myth -- rather than to deed. One might almost say that, in the Symposium, Socrates employs corporeal protection (a bath and special clothing) whereas in the Phaedrus, he employs psychic protection (myth and the praise of madness). Despite the praise of madness in the Phaedrus, which incidentally is absent from the Symposium (where only Alcibiades links philosophy to mania), it is already evident that the greater sobriety of the Phaedrus turns upon a more radical abstraction or ascent from the body than is true of the Symposium. The Phaedrus deals with the psyche and the vision of Ideas in a purer form than the Symposium. The purity of this form is not contradicted but underlined by the praise of madness. The almost complete silence about divine madness in the Symposium is a sign of the defective nature of the discussion of Eros there portrayed. That is, the silence about madness is a kind of silence about the divine; for example, Socrates, following Diotima, calls Eros a daimon in the Symposium, whereas in the Phaedrus (242d9 ff.), he is said to be the son of Aphrodite, and a god. In the Phaedrus, philosophy or madness is a "divine portion" or gift; in the Symposium, the erotic ascent is entrusted to exclusibely human supervision. As we see from the polymorphous natures of the speakers at the banquet, Eros unassisted by the divine is scarcely likely to transcend itself in philosophy. Whatever we may say about the peculiar nature of Socrates as portrayed in the Symposium, it is clear that his speech does nothing to convert his auditors to philosophy, and that he has failed completely in the case of the one man (among the figures in the dialogues) who interested him most: Alcibiades. Something is missing in the Symposium. We might call it the sobriety of madness, with greater preparation for a phrase which, in itself, seems too cryptic. Let us say simply that, by writing the Phaedrus, Plato tells us that the Symposium is a necessary but insufficient step in understanding the nature of Eros. We have to start again, and we start once more with Phaedrus.

The name "Phaedrus" designates a human being rather than something inanimate. It does not name an abstraction, like "The Republic," an event, like "The Symposium," or a human type, like "The Sophist." Furthermore, "Phaedrus" is the name of a historical person, not a mythical one like "Minos." The person is an approximate contemporary of Socrates, unlike "Parmenides," and someone to whom Socrates is clearly superior, as is not apparent in the case of "Timaeus." This superiority does not preclude regular association; Socrates may not be a friend of Phaedrus in the strict sense of the term, but he is a companion of Phaedrus, as he is not of "Protagoras." This companionship is a kind of imitation of friendship, as is not true of Socrates' relations with "Gorgias," "Meno," or "Hippias." Phaedrus is not a young boy whom Socrates meets for the first time, and whose nature he tests, like "Charmides" or "Theaetetus." He is not silent

like "Philebus," not a fanatic like "Euthyphro," not an old and sober friend like "Crito," not a disciple like "Phaedo." So far we seem to be proceeding entirely by negation. Even if this were so, the results would be instructive, since a negative description, as we know from theology, is perhaps the only way to define a unique entity. But we can now be rather more positive. The connection between Socrates and Phaedrus turns upon Eros. However, Socrates does not claim to be in love with Phaedrus, as he does with "Alcibiades"; nor is it ever suggested that Phaedrus loves Socrates. The point is that Socrates and Phaedrus share a love for speeches. The love of speeches is more sober than the love of bodies; Socrates and Phaedrus are united by the sobriety of their Eros. However, Phaedrus' sobriety is base, because directed primarily to the care of his body; whereas Socrates' sobriety is noble, because directed primarily to the care of his psyche. Phaedrus and Socrates represent the two poles of erotic sobriety. The difference between them is suggested in the Phaedrus by their different attitudes toward myth. Phaedrus may well be an atheist; Socrates may well not be. Put less obliquely, Phaedrus represents the degenerate nature of merely human or corporeally centered sobriety, whereas Socrates' sobriety, as psychic or divine, is transformed into, or indistinguishable from, the divine madness. The peak of sobriety is at once the peak of madness: the distinguishing mark, I may add, of Plato's conception of philosophy.

The Phaedrus is not simply about Eros, as one might perhaps say of the Symposium. It is also about speeches or rhetoric, and it culminates in a discussion of writing. In the Symposium, speeches are delivered as a consequence of Eros; in the Phaedrus, we are given a discussion about the writing of speeches to Eros. Similarly, the Symposium culminates in cryptic reference to a conversation between the sober Socrates and the drunken poets Aristophanes and Agathon about writing. In the Phaedrus, the discussion culminates in a technical conversation between the sober and non-poetic Socrates and Phaedrus about writing. The greater sobriety of the Phaedrus, in comparison to the Symposium, is shown by its movement from Eros to the techne of writing, and thus to the mention of dialectic. The link between Eros and writing is the psyche: more specifically, the myth of the varieties of psychic madness, and primarily, of the divine or philosophical madness. Thus we see again that, implicit in the sobriety of the Phaedrus is madness. To this extent, at least, the dialogue would seem to be appropriately named: Socrates describes the perfect writing as a living being, and Phaedrus is a living being who loves speeches. In less playful, or more sober, terms, the ascent to the divine madness, as a necessary completion to the teaching of the Symposium, requires first a criticism of the teaching of the Symposium. And this requires another look at the principle or progenitor of the earlier discussion: Phaedrus. We require another look at sobriety before we are ready to move on to madness (and I add parenthetically that this is an excellent recipe for philosophy: two parts of sobriety to one part of madness).

Although the sober Phaedrus and Socrates both claim to be erotic about speeches, neither is a writer. Poetry and sexual generation are both associated with madness; the sobriety of the Eros of Phaedrus and Socrates has an explicitly passive inflection. Neither Phaedrus nor Socrates generates speeches of his own. Of course, both "speak," but in the crucial instances, they either speak the speeches of others, like actors (hypocrites), or else, in the case of Socrates at least, they test the speeches generated by others. However, both may be regarded as indirect generators of speech. According to Socrates, Phaedrus has inspired more speeches than anyone except Simmias. According to the

Platonic dialogues, Socrates goads or stimulates men into making speeches, thanks to a process which he calls "midwifery," but which is perhaps more frankly portrayed in the Apology as a kind of disagreeableness or ungentlemanliness. Phaedrus is a "father" of logoi because of his beauty, whereas Socrates seems to cause others to generate speeches because of his ugliness. Phaedrus' physical beauty seems to prevent his lovers from ascending to the love of his not so beautiful psyche. Socrates' "ugly" behavior, together with the manifest ugliness of his body, seems to pose no insurmountable obstacle to the love of his unusually beautiful psyche: no obstacle, that is, for those with eyes to see. In terms of the erotic ascent described by Diotima in the Symposium, the transition from corporeal to psychic Eros requires a "guide." Diotima does not explain how this "guide" leads the lover to prefer the extremely beautiful psyche of an ugly body to the not so beautiful psyche of a beautiful body.[1] A genuine understanding of the difference between love for Phaedrus and love for Socrates is not visible in the Symposium. Thus Alcibiades is laughable to the other guests of his obvious incoherent erotic attraction toward Socrates. Love of Socrates ceases to be laughable when we understand the divine portion or fate by which madness is transformed into sobriety, and sobriety into madness, or by which the beautiful becomes ugly and the ugly beautiful.

Let me approach this point in a slightly different way. Phaedrus espouses the cause of the non-lover, both in the Symposium and in the dialogue bearing his name. Socrates, although he defends the lover in the Phaedrus, does so by developing a myth of the psyche, attributed to the poet Stesichorus, the highest function of which consists in guiding us to the essentially passive enterprise of looking at the Ideas. In the Symposium, Socrates presents himself as a student of the prophetess Diotima, that is, as a young man who is defective in his erotic understanding, and who is taught that the peak of erotic activity is, again, a kind of passive looking. Prophetess and poet agree that the highest erotic man is, if not non-erotic, a divine voyeur. What does this mean so far as the three main themes of the Phaedrus are concerned? Eros is first criticized and then praised by two passive or "sterile" erotics, who nevertheless paradoxically stimulate others to generate; this praise, having been prepared by criticism, culminates in a speech about the psyche, according to which human perfection, paradoxically called a species of divine madness, is identified as the passive-erotic vision of non-erotic Ideas. And discussion of the themes introduced in the first two parts of the dialogue leads to the technical discussion of the techne of writing: a technical discussion between two amateurs or non-practitioners of the art in question.

One might well be tempted to conclude that the Phaedrus is a comedy, on the basis of the observations just made. If so, however, we must append that it is a "divine comedy," and hence not lacking in tragic overtones. The praise of passivity is inseparable from the Platonic conception of human perfection as a transcendence of the corporeal Eros; the sobriety of the non-lover has therefore something essential in common with the madness of the philosopher. The sterility of the passive erotic is similar to the anti-poetic vision of the eternal Ideas; even further, the attenuation or cessation of the corporeal Eros, although accompanied by a flowering of the psychic Eros, leads precisely if the latter is successful, to the suppression of one's human individuality. Wisdom

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1. Cf. my Plato's Symposium (New Haven: 1968), pp. 265 ff. and Symposium 210a4 ff.

as the fulfillment of philosophy, at least if wisdom is perfect vision of perfection, amounts to the transformation of man into a god -- or rather, into a noetic Idea. Only in this case, one may suggest, would the meaning of the otherwise mysterious saying of Parmenides become perspicuous: **to gar auto noein estin te kai einai.**

II.

Socrates encounters Phaedrus on the way from Lysias, son of Cephalus, who was Socrates' host in the Republic. Phaedrus is walking in the country for reasons of health, in accord with the advice of Acumenus, the physician, and father of Eryximachus. He no doubt needs the exercise in order to recuperate from what Socrates calls the "banquet" of speeches offered by Lysias (227a1-b7). Phaedrus allows medicine to tend his body and rhetoric to tend his psyche. The defect of rhetoric as psychic medicine is suggested by the fact that it lacks moderation; as a consequence, the lover of rhetoric seems actually to be ruled by the corporeal physician. In any case, Phaedrus has no trouble in interesting Socrates in the topic discussed at this new banquet: Lysias has written that a beautiful youth "ought to gratify the non-lover rather than the lover" (227b8-c8).[2] Phaedrus refers to Lysias' speech as "refined"; Socrates points out that, with some expansion, its elegance would be properly called "useful to the demos," with whom he ironically associates himself (227c7-d2). Let us bear in mind the conjunction of the non-lover, the demos, and utility. Meanwhile, we observe that Phaedrus regards Lysias as the most talented writer of the day, and would rather be able to memorize his speeches than come into a fortune (228a1-4). Phaedrus imitates the philosopher in valuing speeches and memory beyond money; unlike the philosopher, he admires "democratic" rather than "aristocratic" speeches. Presumably he believes that rhetoric is more useful than money, although in view of his tastes, this may be an error on his part. The most charitable, as well as the most cautious, interpretation is probably that Phaedrus loves speeches or rhetoric for selfish reasons, but transcends his selfishness by virtue of his love for speeches. And this love is passive or imitates the non-lover whose praise he admires: Phaedrus wishes that he could memorize Lysias' speeches, not that he could write his own.

Socrates has a "disease for listening to speeches" (228b6) which, he implies, can be ameliorated by Phaedrus. Phaedrus' "medicine" will be shared by doctor and patient alike; the repetition of Lysias' speech will induce a mutual corybantic enthusiasm that replaces the atmosphere of intoxication in the Symposium (228b7). To anticipate Socrates' remark upon the conclusion of the speech, Phaedrus is transformed by rhetoric into a Dionysian reveler, an appropriately feminine condition in which Socrates claims to share (234d1-6). How

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2. Socrates quotes Pindar, Isthmian I, lines 1-2, in such a way as to compare Phaedrus to "my mother Thebes." Pindar places the glory of his polis beyond everything else. For Socrates, the love of speeches transcends the polis; this is related to the location of the dialogue outside the city-wall.

different this is from Phaedrus' characteristic passivity, we may easily infer from his conversation with Socrates about the myth of Boreas and Oreithuia. Phaedrus is vague on the geographical details, and obviously does not believe in the truth of the story.3 As Socrates implies, Phaedrus interprets myths in terms of physics, like Anaxagoras and Metrodorus. Socrates finds this kind of demythologizing "charming" -- that is, it indeed charms men away from the more important task of understanding themselves, and hence amounts to a "kind of boorish wisdom" (229c6-230a6). Socrates must devote his time to investigating his own puzzling nature, which he compares to mythical beasts. It is not clear to him whether he is more complex and puffed up than Typhon, or whether he has a more divine and less vain nature; as we might say, Socrates has not yet understood the nature of his own hybris. He does not therefore deny the possibility of giving physical interpretations to myths, but rather its utility. A proper study of the prodigious nature of man requires acquiescence in conventional religious views (230a1 ff.). Despite his Bacchic susceptibilities, Phaedrus does not share this respect for nomos. His enthusiasm for rhetoric is selfish rather than political; Socrates indicates that this selfishness leads to self-neglect and ignorance. There is a sobriety in Socrates' madness, but a "madness" in Phaedrus' sobriety. Although Phaedrus is accustomed to walk in the countryside, whereas Socrates is not, he is ignorant of the topography and associated myths, which Socrates knows. The countryside and trees do not wish to teach Socrates, but he has learned from men their human significance (230d3). This love of learning, interestingly enough, permits Socrates to appreciate the natural beauty of the locale in a "most unusual" manner -- as though he were a stranger seeing it for the first time. Socrates suggests that this is indeed the case, and that he has been lured into the country by his hunger for speeches (230d5ff.). Whether this is true or not, Socrates is not "drugged" (230d6) by the prospect of a feast, so as to be unable to make an intense and articulate response to the environment. Phaedrus, on the contrary, is aware of almost nothing but Lysias' speech and his desire -- quickly divined by the mantic Socrates (228d7) -- to recite it to Socrates.

We are now approaching high noon, the hottest part of the day and in the hottest season of the year. The two companions have "turned aside" from their walk to sit down beneath a plane tree, with bare feet -- normal for Socrates, unusual for Phaedrus -- for wading in the stream. The location is marked by grace, purity, and clarity; as Socrates says, it is a good place for maidens to play (but not perhaps for Bacchic maidens). Light and shade, heat and coolness, reclining humans and a flowing stream, feminine nature and masculine logos: the setting takes on the character of a harmony of opposites (229a1-c3). This is especially appropriate for the demonstration of the identity between the divine forms of sobriety and madness. Phaedrus, mad with love for Lysias' apparently non-erotic speech, has been prevented by Socrates' prophetic sobriety from testing his memory, and will read to Socrates from the copy he had concealed beneath his cloak.

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3. 229c4: I take his oath to show exasperation with those who believe such tales; this is certainly how Socrates responds to Phaedrus' question.

III.

Lysias, author of the demotic and utilitarian praise of the non-lover, is a rhetorician and logographos, especially famous for his court-room speeches. He appears at the beginning of the Republic, in the home of his father, Cephalus. The members of this family are there portrayed as conceiving of justice in terms of utility. The ascent in the Phaedrus from the non-lover to the lover is parallel to the ascent in the Republic from a utilitarian interpretation of justice to the virtual identification of justice with moderation and its subordination to philosophy. In the Symposium, which emphasizes the hybristic nature of Eros, justice is not mentioned as one of his attributes. The one man who seems seriously concerned with justice is Alcibiades, whose intoxicated appearance at the banquet transforms it into a trial of Socrates for hybris, with himself as the plaintiff. Alcibiades' speech soon reveals, however, that even though he may be correct in his perception of Socrates' nature, his own complaint against Socrates is unjust and rooted in immoderateness. I suggest that the Phaedrus begins with Lysias' speech in order to indicate something about the defective or incomplete nature of the Symposium. Eros and justice, as the Republic makes explicit, are, if not simply incompatible, opposites which need a "third" element to bind them into harmony. The sobriety of the non-lover is more like moderation than is the madness of the lover. An immoderate criticism of the passive Eros is no more just than a praise of Eros that is silent about justice. In the Phaedrus, the ascent from sobriety to madness is not an "abstraction" but rather a sublation, just as, in the Republic, the notion of utility is not discarded but sublated into the final interpretation of justice.

In the Symposium, Phaedrus is the father of the logos; in the Phaedrus, it is Lysias who serves this purpose. The speech of Lysias both criticizes the end of the Symposium and returns us to the theme of the beginning. Our new start is an improvement on the beginning of the Symposium in two ways. First, it is the speech of a professional rhetorician or generator of discourses, and not simply of a lover of discourses. Second, the professionalism of the author renders his speech free from contradictory or obscuring effects that might arise from the enthusiasm of the speaker. Lysias' mastery of the rhetorical technē permits him to give a "disinterested" or just presentation of the merits of the non-lover. His speech imitates philosophy to this extent: it combines technical skill with praise for the utility of sobriety; Lysias is a sober, rather than a mad or inspired, poet. On the other hand, this latter fact represents the defective nature of Lysias' speech; it inspires Phaedrus, but for the wrong reasons, because it is not itself inspired.

Let us now turn to the main points of Lysias' speech. As is befitting its sober message, the speech begins (and indeed continues throughout; see Hackforth's outraged commentary[4]) with no rhetorical flourish; its rhetoric, one might almost say, is anti-rhetorical. The boy knows the situation, and the non-lover has already spoken of their "joint interest" (230e7): there is to be an exchange of goods, or a wholesale rather than a retail business contract. Lovers confer benefits freely only while their desire lasts; the cessation of the erotic desire thereby endangers, perhaps terminates, the advantages enjoyed by the beloved.

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4. R. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedrus (Cambridge: 1952; LLA reprint)

The non-lover, on the contrary, because he acts from freedom rather than necessity, in a sober and business-like manner, which does not interfere with an efficient and technically accurate calculation of profits and losses, nor lead him to quarrel with relatives over the distribution of property, may devote his energies to the benefit of the beloved (231a1-b7). The non-lover's case rests upon a distinction between "what I need" ( **hon deomai** ) and the desire ( **epithymia** ) of Eros. Is this defensible? At least in this sense: according to the non-lover, he desires gratification, as an "objectified" commodity, independent of the personality of the boy, who is to him not a beloved but a reified unit in the free-market economy, whose wares are subject to the laws of supply and demand. The non-lover agrees in part with Marx's analysis of capitalism, but approves of the results. Objectivity grounded in a technically competent selfishness is preferable for buyer and seller to the authentic, human esteem praised by Marxists and existentialists.

Like the modern exemplar of the Protestant ethic, the non-lover prides himself upon his autonomy and industrious efficiency; like the philosopher, he is a sober master of the technē of division and collection (i.e. of profits and losses). He acts in accordance with his own capacity, both toward himself and his family as well as toward reified youths; whereas the lover is carried beyond his capacity, with consequent injustice to all concerned, by the transcendence of madness. In sum, he combines the qualities of hedonism, utilitarianism and technicism in such a way as to abstract from such human qualities as the beautiful and ugly or the noble and the base. Like the philosopher, he disregards human individuality in his pursuit of the general or steadfast. But the manner in which he does so leads to a transformation in the meaning of the true and the false; by beginning from the lowest or common denominator of animal passion, the non-lover terminates in the advanced sciences of cost-accounting, game theory, and, in an anticipatory sense, of computer-based psychology. The origin of this line of development is in the distinction between erotic and non-erotic desire; the former turns upon the personality or humaneness of the beloved, and the latter upon the common physiological structure of buyer and seller. The lover is presented as faithful, not to the beloved, but to his desire for the beloved as beloved; whereas the non-lover is uninterested in the loveableness of the boy, but is faithful exclusively to the possibilities for gratification, considered physiologically or in terms of the body in virtual disregard for the psyche -- probably even for certain bodily qualities, although nothing is said on this point. The non-lover minimizes the connection between his position and desire; however, reflection shows that his more serious claim is not to eliminate desire but to make it autonomous. His own autonomy is not from desire but from the **ananke** of Eros, or the trans-human, i.e. what we call the divine. The non-lover is a "humanist" as well as a hedonist, utilitarian and technicist. But his humanism is inseparable from, or rather identical with, a debasement of the human to the physiological. In slightly different terms, the successful application of the quasi-mathematical version of division and collection to human affairs depends upon the debasement of Eros by physiology.[5]

Eros is an illness leading to immoderateness or the inability to master oneself (231d2ff.); the combination of rhetoric and medicine represented by Lysias and Phaedrus cures the illness, or makes self-mastery possible thanks to a new

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5. Cf. Sophist 227a7ff.

and lower interpretation of the self. There are very few lovers, or at least few excellent lovers, whereas there are many candidates for the title of "extremely useful"; as Socrates initially observed, the non-lover is a democrat in addition to being a humanist, hedonist, utilitarian and technicist (231d-e2). Since "desire" means "physiological gratification," the non-lover brings us egalitarianism or freedom from the subjectivity of value-judgments. Strictly speaking, it should even be irrelevant whether non-lovers and non-beloveds are physically beautiful, young, or in any other corporeally oriented sense (even perhaps their sex) preeminent. But now the defect in Lysias' exoteric or obvious teaching becomes manifest. In a democratic business society of the kind sketched by the non-lover, there is a contradiction between physiological egalitarianism and the difference between the rich and the poor. This is related to an implied physiological difference between the non-lover and the object of his "non-erotic" desire. The non-lover takes it for granted throughout his speech that the boy is not himself motivated by erotic but by financial considerations, or at least by concern for his reputation: for "keeping up appearances" (231e3-232e2). Thus he regularly refers to his relationship with the boy as one of **philia** rather than **eros**, of "gratification" rather than of "desire".[6] The pederastic relationship is regularly contrasted to the relation of friendship (cf. 231c1, 233c6 et passim) or said to interfere with it. But "friendship," as we know, means "advantage," and since "advantage" is essentially economic, while certainly not erotic, it would seem to be most advantageous for the youth to gratify only the wealthiest non-lovers. Even further, his best interests may lie in the sober plundering of wealthy lovers whose technical vision is blinded by the madness of erotic passion. This continues to hold true even if the youth is also motivated by the non-erotic or physiological need for gratification. Where all other factors are irrelevant, a rich "friend" must be preferable to a poor one.

It is not clear that the non-lover sees this defect in his position. For example, he observes that lovers must fear rivals possessing greater wealth or intelligence (232c4-8). Apparently the non-lover does not share these fears because he has achieved what he needs **di'areten** (232d4-5); i.e. through his own efficient management of the joint advantage of himself and the boy in question -- through his intelligence or techne. We have to realize, furthermore, that only a man of a certain degree of wealth or business acumen could profitably avail himself of the argument of the non-lover. The non-lover clearly assumes that, although others may be richer than he, he is rich enough; if others are more intelligent, he is intelligent enough. Indeed, if he loses one boy to a superior rival, there are surely many others, just as there are many non-lovers. His teaching, like many another techne, is a substitute for personal excellence, and its very persuasiveness is a better protection for his own interests than the advantages traditionally predicated of a lover. Nevertheless, in the last analysis, the teaching of the non-lover turns upon the difference between rich and poor; it is oligarchical rather than democratic.

What of the tacit assumption that the boy is either non-erotic or prefers money to the higher considerations? According to the non-lover, friendship comes from intelligence rather than from Eros, again, incidentally, an imitation of the philosophical teaching. That is: in the erotic relation, physical desire for a specific individual precedes, and is the condition for, friendship. In the

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6. E.g. 231e1-2, 232b4 (where **philia** is equated with **hēdonē**), 232d4, 232e1, 232e6.

case of the non-lover, who is disinterestedly interested in physical gratification, and objective toward, or disinterested in, the personal or lovable attributes of the person, friendship -- i.e. a rational relationship based upon mutual advantage -- precedes physical gratification (232e3-233a5). This means that the non-lover, thanks to the impersonal, and hence sober or less compelling, nature of his physical desire, can guarantee the financial advantage of the boy prior to gratification. It is the vulgarity or bestiality of the non-lover's position, and not his freedom from desire, that makes his suit more advantageous. In fact, the non-lover is moved by Eros, but by a very low form of Eros. The success of his argument then turns upon the possession of wealth, and the capacity to corrupt the young by employing the techne of rhetoric to excite greed rather than lust. The non-lover is in fact a concealed lover, however base a lover.

Before we rebel against the baseness of the non-lover, let us remember the results of the earlier stage of our investigation. It is perfectly reasonable to claim that passion interfers with friendship, as well as with the pursuit of the useful, the just, and the true. Furthermore, the non-lover praises moderation, intelligence, and a prudent concern for the future (233b6ff.) He is eager to improve the condition of his friend, to free his perception of pleasure from the pain accompanying Eros, to teach him self-mastery, and to balance justice with mercy. I have pointed out that this whole argument is, among other things, a legitimate criticism of the general teaching of the Symposium. This is made clear in an amusing way. The erotic man (as the Symposium asserts) is the most needy man. If one must gratify the most needy, then one must gratify the worst rather than the best. In philosophical language, if we love what we do not have, must not the lover of goodness be bad? Those men who strive most assiduously for perfection must themselves be worthless (233d5ff.). In other words, the erotic mania, if it is not regulated by a divine fate, or a prophetic synopsis, is extraordinarily dangerous, and more likely even in the rarest cases to produce an Alcibiades than a Socrates. We must first have what we desire, thanks to divine madness, precisely in order to desire it soberly. Thus the non-lover warns us that, to follow Diotima's advice, would mean inviting beggars rather than friends to our "private banquets" (233e1). He suggests, in effect, that this is the mistake made by Agathon; and, appropriately enough, at this point his speech sounds more like that of Pausanias (Agathon's lover) than like that of Phaedrus, or like a mixture of the speeches of Pausanias and Phaedrus. One should gratify those moderate, sober, stable, clever lovers (who for prudential reasons call themselves "non-lovers") who are best able to show their gratitude. In exoteric terms, one should gratify those on whose pensions ( **ousia** ) one can rely; in esoteric terms, one should gratify those who already possess the good or **ousia** in the ontological sense (233e6-234c5). In sum: the baseness of Lysias' speech contains a serious teaching, or rather two serious teachings, in however ironical a form. As always in Plato, the low prefigures the high; the philosopher must learn to understand dirt and other low things if he is to understand the psyche and, finally, the cosmos. The difference between the philosopher and the gentleman leads the latter to recoil from vulgarity, whereas the philosopher has inured himself to practice his **akribologia** even upon a "tedious piece of rhetoric" which, in Hackforth's words, "deserves little comment."[7] The non-lover, then, teaches us something about human baseness, but he also has something to say about the nature of philosophy.

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7. Hackforth, op. cit., p. 31.